

Acts of Courage: Inside America's Military

TODAY'S COAST GUARD HEROES



by Joyce Markovics

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by Joyce Markovics

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Always Ready

The three-person **crew** of the fishing boat *Mary Lynn* was in serious trouble on August 26, 2005. They were trapped in the Gulf of Mexico by a fierce storm. Towering 40-foot (12-m) waves had slammed into the boat, knocking the crew into the water. Under a pitch-black sky, they clung to the back of the boat, hoping that the sea would not drag them under. Luckily, the U.S. Coast Guard was on its way.

The storm on August 26, 2005, caused dangerous conditions for people in the Gulf of Mexico.

Before the crew was thrown into the water by the high waves, they were able to send out an emergency signal to the Coast Guard.

One of the five branches of the **armed forces**, the U.S. Coast Guard was established in 1790—more than 200 years ago. Since then, the Coast Guard has courageously protected the nation's waters from **terrorist** attacks and other dangerous situations. One of the Coast Guard's most important jobs, however, is to save people who are in danger in the water—like the crew of the *Mary Lynn*.



The U.S. Coast Guard also protects the nation's waterways by searching boats for drugs and other illegal goods.



The members of the U.S. Coast Guard work in many places in the United States and around the world. The parts of this map that are highlighted in red show where some of the events in this book took place.

A Killer Storm



Kenyon Bolton

Rank: Aviation Survival Technician Third Class
Hometown: Clearwater, Florida
Event: Hurricane Katrina
Date: August 26–27, 2005
Honor: Distinguished Flying Cross

As crew members of the *Mary Lynn* hung on to the back of their boat, Coast Guard **rescue swimmer** Kenyon Bolton was lowered by his team from a **Jayhawk helicopter** into the Gulf of Mexico. Waves pounded his body as he fought to reach the *Mary Lynn*'s crew members. When he finally reached them, he felt something brush between his legs. It was a shark! "I was surprised it was so close to the surface in such rough weather," said Bolton. "It made me think twice about what was out of sight." Fortunately, the shark quickly swam away.



When there are stormy seas, rescuers face great danger from huge waves and strong winds.

Bolton then attached a **rescue cable** to each of the *Mary Lynn*'s crew members, one at a time. The helicopter team **hoisted** them out of the raging waters and into the helicopter—saving their lives. “They were all exhausted,” Bolton said. “They’d been through a long night of giant waves and stress.”



The storm that slammed the crew of the *Mary Lynn* was **Hurricane** Katrina. Over the following days, it grew larger and stronger. When it hit land in Louisiana on August 29, 2005, the brave members of the U.S. Coast Guard rescued nearly 33,000 people!

For his bravery, Coast Guard rescue swimmer Kenyon Bolton (right) was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during a ceremony on January 27, 2006. The medal is awarded to members of the armed forces for extraordinary heroism while in flight.

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About the Author

Joyce Markovics is a writer and editor in New York City. In writing this book, she wished to pay tribute to all the brave men and women who have risked their own safety for the sake of others.

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TODAY'S ★★★★★ COAST GUARD ★★★★★ HEROES

For more than 200 years, the U.S. Coast Guard has courageously protected the nation's waters from terrorist attacks and other dangers. One of the Coast Guard's most important jobs, however, is to save people who are in distress in America's waters. In their work, Guardians often find themselves in harm's way. This book recounts some of their stories. From Aviation Survival Technician Kenyon Bolton, who saved the crew of the *Mary Lynn* after 40-foot (12-m) waves slammed into their boat, knocking them into the water, to Petty Officer Kristin Reger Lunkley, who braved swimming in the choppy waters of San Francisco Bay to save a man whose boat had capsized, the courageous actions of the U.S. Guardians in this book show what heroism truly means.

TODAY'S AIR FORCE HEROES

TODAY'S ARMY HEROES

★ **TODAY'S COAST GUARD HEROES**

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